ABOUT – FACTS AND FIGURES

**Impact of Father Absence on Children and Society**

* Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor.
* In 2002, 7.8 percent of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 38.4 percent of children in female-householder families. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children’s Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002, P200-547, Table C8. Washington D.C.: GPO, 2003.
* A child with a nonresident father is 54 percent more likely to be poorer than his or her father. Source: Sorenson, Elaine and Chava Zibman. “Getting to Know Poor Fathers Who Do Not Pay Child Support.” Social Service Review 75 (September 2001): 420-434.
* Infant mortality rates are 1.8 times higher for infants of unmarried mothers than for married mothers. Source: Matthews, T.J., Sally C. Curtin, and Marian F. MacDorman. Infant Mortality Statistics from the 1998 Period Linked Birth/Infant Death Data Set. National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 12. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2000
* Based on birth and death data for 217,798 children born in Georgia in 1989 and 1990, infants without a father’s name on their birth certificate (17.9 percent of the total) were 2.3 times more likely to die in the first year of life compared to infants with a father’s name on their birth certificate. Source: Gaudino, Jr., James A., Bill Jenkins, and Foger W. Rochat. “No Fathers’ Names: A Risk Factor for Infant Mortality in the State of Georgia, USA.” Social Science and Medicine 48 (1999): 253-265.
* Unmarried mothers are less likely to obtain prenatal care and more likely to have a low birth-weight baby. Researchers find that these negative effects persist even when they take into account factors, such as parental education, that often distinguish single-parent from two-parent families. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Report to Congress on Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing. Hyattsville, MD (Sept. 1995): 12.
* A study of 2,921 mothers revealed that single mothers were twice as likely as married mothers to experience a bout of depression in the prior year. Single mothers also reported higher levels of stress, fewer contacts with family and friends, less involvement with church or social groups and less overall social support. Source: Cairney, John and Michael Boyle et al. “Stress, Social Support and Depression in Single and Married Mothers.” Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology 38 (August 2003): 442-449.
* In a longitudinal study of more than 10,000 families, researchers found that toddlers living in stepfamilies and single-parent families were more likely to suffer a burn, have a bad fall, or be scarred from an accident compared to kids living with both of their biological parents. Source: O’Connor, T., L. Davies, J. Dunn, J. Golding, ALSPAC Study Team. “Differential Distribution of Children’s Accidents, Injuries and Illnesses across Family Type.” Pediatrics 106 (November 2000): e68.
* A study of 3,400 middle schoolers indicated that not living with both biological parents quadruples the risk of having an affective disorder. “Family Psychosocial Risk Factors in a Longitudinal Epidemiological Study of Adolescents.” Journal of American Academic Child Adolescent Psychiatry 44 (February 2005): 121-129.
* Children who live apart from their fathers are more likely to be diagnosed with asthma and experience an asthma-related emergency even after taking into account demographic and socioeconomic conditions. Unmarried, cohabiting parents and unmarried parents living apart are 1.76 and 2.61 times, respectively, more likely to have their child diagnosed with asthma. Marital disruption after birth is associated with a 6-fold increase in the likelihood a children will require an emergency room visit and 5-fold increase of an asthma-related emergency. *Source: Harknett, Kristin. Children’s Elevated Risk of Asthma in Unmarried Families: Underlying Structural and Behavioral Mechanisms. Working Paper #2005-01-FF. Princeton, NJ: Center for Research on Child Well-being, 2005: 19-27.*
* Even after controlling for income, youths in father-absent households still had significantly higher odds of incarceration than those in mother-father families. Youths who never had a father in the household experienced the highest odds. Source: Harper, Cynthia C. and Sara S. McLanahan. “Father Absence and Youth Incarceration.” Journal of Research on Adolescence 14 (September 2004): 369-397.
* A 2002 Department of Justice survey of 7,000 inmates revealed that 39% of jail inmates lived in mother-only households. Approximately forty-six percent of jail inmates in 2002 had a previously incarcerated family member. One-fifth experienced a father in prison or jail. *Source: James, Doris J. Profile of Jail Inmates, 2002. (NCJ 201932). Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, July 2004.*
* A study of 13,986 women in prison showed that more than half grew up without their father. Forty-two percent grew up in a single-mother household and sixteen percent lived with neither parent. (Fathers and Daughters). Source: Snell, Tracy L and Danielle C. Morton. Women in Prison: Survey of Prison Inmates, 1991. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, 1994: 4.
* Even after controlling for community context, there is significantly more drug use among children who do not live with their mother and father. Source: Hoffmann, John P. “The Community Context of Family Structure and Adolescent Drug Use.” Journal of Marriage and Family 64 (May 2002): 314-330.
* Of the 228 students studied, those from single-parent families reported higher rates of drinking and smoking as well as higher scores on delinquency and aggression tests when compared to boys from two-parent households. Source: Griffin, Kenneth W., Gilbert J. Botvin, Lawrence M. Scheier, Tracy Diaz and Nicole L. Miller. “Parenting Practices as Predictors of Substance Use, Delinquency, and Aggression Among Urban Minority Youth: Moderating Effects of Family Structure and Gender.” Psychology of Addictive Behaviors 14 (June 2000): 174-184.
* Being raised by a single mother raises the risk of teen pregnancy, marrying with less than a high school degree, and forming a marriage where both partners have less than a high school degree. Source: Teachman, Jay D. “The Childhood Living Arrangements of Children and the Characteristics of Their Marriages.” Journal of Family Issues 25 (January 2004): 86-111.
* Researchers using a pool from both the U.S. and New Zealand found strong evidence that father absence has an effect on early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy. Teens without fathers were twice as likely to be involved in early sexual activity and seven times more likely to get pregnant as an adolescent. *Source: Ellis, Bruce J., John E. Bates, Kenneth A. Dodge, David M. Ferguson, L. John Horwood, Gregory S. Pettit, and Lianne Woodward. “Does Father Absence Place Daughters at Special Risk for Early Sexual Activity and Teenage Pregnancy.” Child Development 74 (May/June 2003): 801-821.*
* Compared to living with both parents, living in a single-parent home doubles the risk that a child will suffer physical, emotional, or educational neglect. Source: America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being. Table SPECIAL1. Washington, D.C.: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 1997
* An analysis of child abuse cases in a nationally representative sample of 42 counties found that children from single-parent families are more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse than children who live with both biological parents. Compared to their peers living with both parents, children in single parent homes had:
  + a 77% greater risk of being physically abused
  + an 87% greater risk of being harmed by physical neglect
  + a 165% greater risk of experiencing notable physical neglect
  + a 74% greater risk of suffering from emotional neglect
  + an 80% greater risk of suffering serious injury as a result of abuse

*Source: Sedlak, Andrea J. and Diane D. Broadhurst. The Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect: Final Report. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. Washington, D.C., September 1996.*

* Researchers at Columbia University found that children living in two-parent household with a poor relationship with their father are 68% more likely to smoke, drink, or use drugs compared to all teens in two-parent households. Teens in single mother households are at a 30% higher risk than those in two-parent households. Source: “Survey Links Teen Drug Use, Relationship With Father.” Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Weekly 6 September 1999: 5.
* The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth found that obese children are more likely to live in father-absent homes than are non-obese children. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth
* Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school. *Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1993.*
* Father involvement in schools is associated with the higher likelihood of a student getting mostly A's. This was true for fathers in biological parent families, for stepfathers, and for fathers heading single-parent families. Source: Nord, Christine Winquist, and Jerry West. Fathers’ and Mothers’ Involvement in Their Children’s Schools by Family Type and Resident Status. (NCES 2001-032). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2001.
* Students living in father-absent homes are twice as likely to repeat a grade in school; 10 percent of children living with both parents have ever repeated a grade, compared to 20 percent of children in stepfather families and 18 percent in mother-only families. Source: Nord, Christine Winquist, and Jerry West. Fathers’ and Mothers’ Involvement in Their Children’s Schools by Family Type and Resident Status. (NCES 2001-032). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2001.
* In 2001, 61 percent of 3- to 5-year olds living with two parents were read aloud to everyday by a family member, compared to 48% of children living in single- or no-parent families. Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002. Table ED1. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003.
* Kindergarteners who live with single-parents are over-represented in those lagging in health, social and emotional, and cognitive outcomes. Thirty-three percent of children who were behind in all three areas were living with single parents while only 22% were not lagging behind. *Source: Wertheimer, Richard and Tara Croan, et al. Attending Kindergarten and Already Behind: A Statistical Portrait of Vulnerable Young Children. Child Trends Research Brief. Publication #2003-20. Washington, DC: Child Trends, 2003.*
* In two-parent families, children under the age of 13 spend an average of 1.77 hours engaged in activities with their fathers and 2.35 hours doing so with their mothers on a daily basis in 1997. Children in single parent families spent on .42 hours with their fathers and 1.26 hours with their mothers on daily basis. Source: Lippman, Laura, et al. Indicators of Child, Family, and Community Connections. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, 2004.
* Half of all children with highly involved fathers in two-parent families reported getting mostly A's through 12th grade, compared to 35.2% of children of nonresident father families. *Source: National Center for Education Statistics. The Condition of Education. NCES 1999022. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Education, 1999: 76.*